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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Costa Rica

SUBJECT Possible Display of False Name and Flag by Merchant Ships Entering Iron Curtain and Red Chinese Ports

PLACE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE) - - - - -

DATE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE)

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SOURCE US national; officer of US merchant ship.

Source has sailed Central and South American waters for many years, and is evaluated by US Navy's preparing officer as a competent observer.

[The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3(c), NSCID 7. (DIC-11ND Confidential Report No 204-54)]

1. When I was last in Costa Rica [April 1954] I was told by a government official of that country (whose name I promised not to disclose) that some merchant ships have been painting on false names and fraudulently hoisting the Costa Rican flag prior to entering Soviet and Communist Chinese satellite ports. The specific countries and ports were unnamed.
2. The Costa Rican official added that this is a source of embarrassment to his government. He did not express an opinion as to what ships there were or to whether the fraudulent action was being taken to avoid trade restrictions, to avoid the four hundred dollars Costa Rican ship registration fee, or both. The official has requested merchant ship masters to inform him of the name and location of any ships sighted flying the Costa Rican flag, so that he might check their registration.
3. A merchant ship master, whose nationality was not given, sighted the S/S ZETOPAN, in a South American port, flying the Costa Rican flag and reported it to this official. The official later informed the reporting master that the ZETOPAN was not registered in Costa Rica.

[The Navy's preparing officer places little credibility in the allegation of fraudulent hoisting of the Costa Rican flag, but prepared the report feeling that it might prove of interest.]

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